Business Week
17 July - 23 July 06

Indian government revision of all industry drawback rates

17 July 2006

Media reports indicate that the Indian finance ministry has published the revised all-industry drawback rates, which will come into effect from July 15.

The Drawback Schedule includes 84 new items. These include cotton bags, leather caps, suitcases, handbags and various sports equipment/accessories.

In the readymade garment sector, the new drawback rate for knitted cotton blouses/shirts/tops made from cotton is 6.7% with a cap of Rs29 (0.6%) per piece compared with the existing rate of 6% with a cap of Rs25 per piece. The new rate for knitted blouses/shirts/tops made from man-made fibres is 7.8% with a cap of Rs32 per piece compared with the existing rate of 7.5% with a cap of Rs30 per piece. For knitted blouses/shirts/tops made with a blend of cotton and man-made fibre blend, the new drawback rate is 7.2% with a cap of Rs30 per piece versus the existing rate of 6.8% with a cap of Rs28 per piece. The drawback rates on woven garments have been revised accordingly.

Biotech Fashion Show showcases biotech fabrics

17 July 2006

The Biotech Fashion show, held in Toronto, featured haute couture dresses made by using industrial biotechnology to convert corn sugar to biodegradable fabrics. The show provided attendees at the World Congress on Industrial Biotechnology and Bioprocessing with an opportunity to see how their work is affecting the world of fashion.

The show featured both ready-to-wear clothing and designer gowns—including some made by well known fashion designers Halston, Oscar de la Renta, Stephen Burrows, Heatherette, and Elisa Jimenez—that were made with Ingeo fabric, which is spun from polylactide (PLA), a compostable biopolymer made from dextrose corn sugar.

The fashion show highlighted the diversity of biobased products made with industrial biotechnology currently available to consumers, including plastics, food ingredients and fuels.

June sales triple at Execute

17 July 2006

Performance items producer for the sports industry Execute Sports, Inc. has revealed that June's online sales volume has more than tripled since its March launch through retailers including Dick's Sporting Goods, The Sports Authority, Sport Chalet, Sports R Us and Olympia.

Execute Sports is also preparing to launch an entry level line of wakeskates under the ‘Execute’ brand which will premiere at the Surf Expo in Orlando in September.

Gerber opens cutter assembly centre in Shanghai

17 July 2006

Integrated software and hardware automation systems for manufacturers and retailers in the sewn products and flexible materials industries Gerber Technology has opened of its Cutter Assembly Centre in Shanghai, China, with its partner, Shanghai Machine Tool Works Ltd. Gerber displayed the Gerbercutter XLc7000, its first automated cutter designed in the US and manufactured in China.

James Arthurs, chairman of Gerber Technology and president Asia-Pacific of Gerber Scientific Inc., introduced the company’s newest offering in automation technology. “After more than three years of preparation, including beta testing with five customers in China over the past nine months, we are pleased to begin manufacturing cutters in China,” he stated.

Visitors were given a view of the entire manufacturing process at the centre, which meets the company’s production standards, including storage, assembly, testing, safety, delivery and office areas. It is its first cutter assembly base in China.

The Gerbercutter XLc7000 is designed for apparel manufacturers in growth markets who are looking for value-priced solutions that offer reliability and performance. The cutter is said to offer low ownership costs, accuracy and ease of use. It cuts up to 7cm of compressed material, accommodating a wide variety of fabric types and material widths up to 2 metres. Its variable vacuum system holds materials securely in place during the cutting process resulting in cut parts that are accurate ply to ply.

Nike and Apple launch new sport kit

17 July 2006

Nike and Apple have officially launched the Nike + iPod Sport Kit, the first product developed through the partnership between the two companies reported at the end of May.

The kit allows Nike+ ready footwear to communicate with the Apple iPod nano through a sensor in the shoe and a receiver plugged into the music player allowing the runner to receive audible updates on speed, distance and calories burned throughout the run.

Nike is also introducing the Nike Air Zoom Moire+ and the Nike Air Zoom Plus+, the first of six styles of footwear that will comprise Nike+.

Shoes that heat and cool

17 July 2006

According to media reports, a new shoe system has been introduced that is said to be capable of heating or cooling the feet. The target markets for the product include the sports industry as well as the military and emergency services.

The material enabling the temperature variation is incorporated into the shoe's structure during the manufacturing process, with the cooling/heating probe in contact with the sole of the foot.

According to the designers, the boot is able to extract heat from the environment and push it back into the boot through the Acti-Heat system. By contrast, the Acti-Cool system can extract heat from the foot and release the warmth if the wearer is in a warm environment.

Montane launches new fleece range using Polartec

17 July 2006

Performance outdoor clothing company Montane has introduced fleece garments to its range and is using high-tech, breathable fabric Polartec.

The brand's unisex Pulse Shirt uses lightweight Polartec Classic 100 fabric which is machine washable and has a durable light insulation layer. The garment can be worn as part of the Montane range or simply as a technical, outdoor sport pullover. The fleece provides warmth to the torso area and uses Polartec Classic Micro in the sleeves and underarms to minimise bulk and maximise comfort.

Other features include: bi-fabric, zoned construction; front neck zip for venting; zipped chest pocket; single hand adjustable elasticated drawcord hem; beard guard lined collar.

The product will be available at the beginning of September.

Changes to Pakistan School of Fashion Design

18 July 2006

The School of Fashion and Design, established by the Ministry of Commerce in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1995, has made a significant value-enhancing contribution to the textile and apparel sector in a short period. The school will now comprise four departments: Fashion Design, Textile Design, Accessories and Product Design and Fashion Marketing and Promotion. These departments will impart training in a broad range of disciplines, including sportswear, menswear, jewellery, leather accessories, footwear, ceramics, furniture and carpets.

New Zealand introduces new licensing rules for industrial hemp

18 July 2006

Commercial cultivation of hemp may become more common in New Zealand when rules concerning its production are relaxed from August 1.

The Ministry's medicine regulatory agency Medsafe will be implementing a new regulatory regime for the cultivation, processing and distribution of industrial hemp as an agricultural crop. Those who wish to grow, trade or process hemp will need to be licensed.

Spokesman Derek Fitzgerald said individuals and organisations would be allowed to grow hemp for industrial purposes and research under certain conditions.

The new licensing system covers only industrial hemp, which refers to varieties of Cannabis sativa with low tetrahydrocannabinol— the psychoactive substance found in illicit marijuana crops— and primarily cultivated for their fibre or seed.

Other varieties of cannabis will continue to be regulated by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 and the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1977.

Hemp fibre is used in the manufacture of ropes, textiles, paper and plastics.

Indian textile exports rise by 17%

18 July 2006

India's merchandise exports surged to record levels across all major commodity groups and destinations during 2005-06 and the trend is continuing in the current year.

Exports are estimated to have reached a record figure of $102.7 billion during fiscal 2005-06. Commodities that witnessed very high growth include petroleum products (64%); raw cotton (570%); and textiles as a group (over 17%).

India's top export destinations based on their percentage share of India's total merchandise exports were USA (16.75%); United Arab Emirates (8.36%); People's Republic of China (6.54%); Singapore (5.42%); and the United Kingdom (5.01%).

Exports grew at a rate of 23% and crossed the $100 billion mark during this period and are expected to exceed $120 billion by the end of 2006-07. On the employment front, an additional 21 million jobs are expected to be created between 2004-05 and 2009-10 as a result of export growth.

Suunto launches new training range for fitness assessment

18 July 2006

Sports manufacturer Suunto has launched a new training range to help sport enthusiasts meet their training goals.

The new Suunto t1, t3, and t4 are wristop computer watches which use new technology to give information about the effects of training.

The t3 measures the user's heart rate, the intervals between heart beats and the fluctuation between intervals. The wristop then displays the training effect of a workout on a one-to-five scale along with the remaining time needed to achieve the user's workout goal. With this information, the athlete can decide whether to increase the intensity of their workout, or slow down to avoid overtraining. It can be paired with other Suunto products to measure and record speed and distance. The t3 logs workouts, and information from training sessions can be downloaded onto a PC. The product won an ispo Outdoor award at the trade fair in Munich.

Along with the real time training effect function, the t4 features a specialist coaching function that monitors progress and makes workout recommendations for frequency, duration and intensity. The t4 maintains an up-to-date five day plan for the athlete's progress.

The t1 is useful for people who enjoy walking, spinning, cycling and running. During exercise, the device displays real time heart rate and shows the number of calories being burned. The device can help the user stick to goals using the personalised fitness profile.

The new range will be available in the autumn.

Naturally Advanced Technologies appoints two new directors

18 July 2006

Canada-based provider of sustainable, environmentally-friendly fibres and fabrics Naturally Advanced Technologies Inc. has appointed two new directors to its board, Mr Miljenko Horvat and Mr Peter Moore.

Mr Horvat has over twenty years of experience in banking and private equity investing and is currently president of Vancouver-based Horvat Capital Corp.

Mr Moore has been on the advisory board of the company since October 2004 and has over twenty years of footwear and apparel experience, including design and development work for Nike, Adidas and several other prominent brands.

US manufacturing output increase, despite textile decline

18 July 2006

Reports indicate that US manufacturing output increased by 0.7% in June, and the May level was revised up. In the second quarter, total output advanced at an annual rate of 6.6%, and manufacturing output rose by 5.4%.

The production of materials advanced 0.8% in June, and the output of both energy and non-energy materials increased. All of the major categories of durable materials posted gains in June although in the nondurable materials sector there was a significant decline in the output of textiles.

The output of nondurable goods gained 0.3% in June; the largest contributors to the increase being petroleum and coal products, chemicals, plastics and rubber products. The output of paper, apparel and leather grew, while indexes for food and textiles declined.

FESI urges agreement on anti-dumping measures

19 July 2006

The Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industries (FESI) has urged EU member states to agree on a solution for anti-dumping measures on footwear

during a meeting of the Anti-dumping Committee to re-establish certainty for economic operators and allow for continued growth of EU trade with China and Vietnam. The meeting will be held in Brussels this week.

The European Commission is currently proposing a deferred duty system (DDS) for leather footwear imports from China and Vietnam. The DDS would provide a set quantity of shoes to enter the EU before the anti-dumping duty would apply. The ad valorem duty for shoes outside the allowance would be set at 23% for China and 29.5% for Vietnam.

According to the statement from FESI, a deferred duties system, if carefully designed in agreement with the two Asian governments, could mean a fairer deal for consumers, for the European footwear industry and for retailers, unlike the current punitive duties. However, FESI stressed that such a system must be administered transparently and ensure predictability, basing anti-dumping duty-free import volumes on historical trade flows of individual operators and allowing for substantial annual growth of these volumes during the lifetime of the measures.

FESI stated that it is deeply concerned that the proposed duties are considerably higher than under the previous proposal, especially in the case of Vietnam. This runs counter to any development policy logic: Vietnam, which saw its footwear exports to the EU decline and prices rise in 2005, will be capped to a lower export level and face substantially higher duties than China.

Johnson and Senden wear Dunning Golf performance apparel at British Open

19 July 2006

Golf professionals Zach Johnson and John Senden will premiere the Dunning Golf all-weather autumn 2006 collection during the British Open Championship, July 20-23, at Royal Liverpool in Hoylake, UK.

They will compete in a complete cool-weather apparel system designed to provide playability without excessive layering. These pieces include Interface Thermal Long Sleeve WindPro Rainshield Pullover which is completely waterproof and uses stretchable material with fleece inside. It is breathable, with next-to-the-skin insulating properties and moisture-wicking to keep the body’s surface warm and dry.

They will also wear the Interface Thermal Windshield Long Sleeve under Panel Zip which has similar properties and The Interface FX Pique Short Sleeve Contrast Stitch Polo in the Pro Compression Long Sleeve Mock.

Reflexite re-launches website

19 July 2006

High visibility products manufacturer Reflexite is re-launching its website, www.reflexite-europe.com. The revamped website those interested in safety solutions access to company information.

Among the new features of the website is an educational and informative technology section and the site also offers advice about microprismatic retro-reflective safety solutions and key information about legislation.

There is also a new product section where products are listed under applications and markets where safety and visibility are key requirements such as high visibility workwear, vehicle conspicuity, traffic control systems, maritime safety, films and accessories. There is also a new market section which has testimonials from customers and a link to the entire Reflexite product range.

Lija makes new appointment

19 July 2006

Golf and sportswear designer Lija, has appointed Judy Donovan as sales manager for eastern USA.

Ms Donovan has extensive golf market knowledge gained in the seven years she was national sales manager with Liz Claiborne, where she launched the Lizgolf division. She also served as director of US Sales for Burberry Golf and was vice president of sales for Eastern Pacific Apparel.

Land’s End introduces new backpack with electroluminescent lamps

19 July 2006

Clothing, soft luggage and home products retailer Land’s End has launched a new backpack which features electroluminescent lamps. Made up of millions of separate luminous "dots," these lamps are said to penetrate darkness more efficiently than typical lights or reflective materials. According to independent testing, the Cool Blue's lights can be seen from up to 1,000 feet away in darkness.

Cool Blue comprises 600-denier poly fabric with a double-strength 1,200-denier bottom and the padded shoulder straps and lumbar area adds comfort.

BASF chairman takes over APA chairmanship

19 July 2006

Heinrich von Pierer, head of Siemens AG supervisory board, handed over the chairmanship of the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA) to Jürgen Hambrecht, chairman of the board of executive directors of BASF Aktiengesellschaft, on July 18. Mr Pierer had headed the APA since its formation in 1993.

Mr Hambrecht spent many years in Hong Kong and was responsible for the Asia Pacific region on BASF's board for five years. The qualified chemist has headed BASF since May 2003. In his capacity as chairman of the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business, he will be aided by its five supporting institutions: The Federation of German Industries (BDI, the Association of German Banks (BDB), the Federation of German Wholesale and Foreign Trade (BGA), the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) and the German Asia-Pacific Business Association (OAV). APA is also involved in the Asia Pacific region via the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK). Some 1,500 German companies are active in the committee.

OutDoor trade fair focuses on outdoor women

20 July 2006

With nearly six million female enthusiasts, the dynamic sport of Nordic walking has long been dominated by women. This year's OutDoor trade fair, to be held from July 23-26 at the exhibition grounds in Friedrichshafen, Germany, will cater for the functional and style needs of female customers – a segment from which the industry hopes to see further turnover increases.

Manufacturers of rain jackets, hiking boots, accessories, tents and backpacks are reporting steadily increasing sales figure and annual sales of outdoor sports equipment in Europe have already reached the €5 billion mark ($6.3 billion). In Germany alone, the figure is €1.5 billion and experts are counting on another year of considerable growth.

At 77.2%, international participation at OutDoor 2006 has hit an all-time high. As many as 675 exhibitors from 40 countries will attend, many of which are among the top 100 brands.

70% of surveyed exhibitors reported having a women's collection already in place – and some have been enjoying up to 13% higher sales figures.

Pakistan enjoys Preferential Trading Arrangements

20 July 2006

Pakistan is seeing the benefits from its first Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Sri Lanka, which came into force in June 2005. Pakistani exports such as footwear, engineering products, sanitary goods, chemicals, leather and some textile items have been taking advantage of duty concessions in the Sri Lankan market.

In addition, negotiations for a fully fledged FTA with China are progressing well; an Early Harvest Program took effect in January. As a result Pakistani exports such as leather articles, some textile items, marble, sports goods, fruits, vegetables and mineral products will have reduced duties and all these items will be exportable duty free by January 2008.

Wilson wins again at Wimbledon

20 July 2006

The 22nd Racket, Clothing and Equipment Census from Sports Marketing Surveys at the Wimbledon Championships showed that sporting goods manufacturer Wilson has maintained its position as the overall number one racket of choice at the 2006 Championships, and was again used by reigning champion Roger Federer.

Ladies Singles winner Amelie Mauresmo used a Dunlop racket, although Babolat continues to be the preferred racket of Ladies Singles competitors, with the Men's Singles dominated by Head. Amongst the juniors, Wilson was the racket of choice.

The battle between Nike and adidas to claim the number one footwear brand continued in the 2006 Championships, and these two brands now account for over two thirds of all player footwear at the Championships.

$3.8 million worth of counterfeit goods seized in Dubai

20 July 2006

According to statistics compiled by the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Department and Intervention Department of Dubai Customs, counterfeit goods worth over AED14 million ($3.8 million) were seized between February and June this year. Counterfeit goods seized in June alone were worth in excess of AED7 million.

Between February and June, customs seized a total of 2,212,147 boxes containing counterfeit goods, the bulk of which were intercepted at the Jebel Ali Port and the

Dubai International Airport.

CDs and automobile spare parts comprised the bulk of the counterfeit goods seized, but watches, clothing and footwear, and brand stickers were also amongst the goods discovered. The bulk of the counterfeit imports came from the Far East, followed by Central Asia and Africa.

Outdoor Retailer Summer Market sold out

20 July 2006

Over 950 companies will exhibit at the 2006 Summer Market, which will take place in Salt Lake City, USA, from August 10-13. With just over 200 new exhibitors, Summer Market is completely sold out for its 25th anniversary event and has grown from 400 to just over 4,000 booths since its premiere in 1982.

Exhibitors will showcase the latest outdoor gear, new products, and innovations in every category for the upcoming 2007 season including new advances in technical fabrics and materials and trends toward lighter weight gear and organic and natural products.

Summer Market will feature the first ever two-day Open Air Demo at Willard Bay State Park, on August 8-9 with 60 manufacturers and over 1,000 retailers expected to attend. Attendees will have the opportunity to test the latest gear in a beach and water environment. The event will feature paddling demonstrations, Teva's Salt Run trail runs, Hummer's SUV test track, Magellan's GPS treasure hunt, Wynit's outdoor photo contest, Mountain Hardwear's Base Camp Beer Garden, music, a Thule sponsored barbeque, and camping accommodation.

The North Face wins 2006 Polartec European APEX Award

20 July 2006

British outdoor apparel and equipment brand The North Face has won the 2006 Polartec European APEX Awards with its Men’s Apex Free Line jacket, which combines the warmth, insulation and breathability of a soft shell with the added comfort and water resistance that comes from welding technology.

The jacket has no stitched fabric overlaps to cause bunching or friction and no stitching to allow water to penetrate. Utilising Polartec’s Power Shield fabric it features sonically welded seams with external tape, a fully adjustable hood, two welded Napoleon chest pockets, a water-resistant front zipper, two hand pockets, Velcro adjustable cuffs and a single-hand adjustable hem cinch cord.

Nominations for the Polartec APEX Awards are selected for consideration by Polartec APEX secret shoppers. The products then undergo field testing and are reviewed by an independent panel of judges. Products are measured against their intended end-use and are judged on their innovation and versatility; functionality, fit and comfort, which includes performance and wear qualities; and aesthetics, which includes beauty, style, flair and the fundamentals of good design.

Mammut expands range for summer 2007

20 July 2006

Sporting company Mammut Sports Group Ltd. has added a number of new apparel products to its summer 2007 range.

In the alpine and climbing range, the Hybrid Blend Jacket offers climate-controlled comfort thanks to the of hard and soft shell materials and combines breathable Polartec Power Shield with waterproof 3L DRYtech for protection against rain and freedom of movement.

The Core Jacket is fashioned from premium Schoeller textiles and coated with NanoSphere and benefits from the latest ultrasonic processing technology for seam-free comfort. The soft shell jacket provides protection against wind and rain and offers breathability and freedom of movement.

The Syenite women’s climbing tops are made with the body mapping concept, a Dri-release yarn and seamless technology.

The Microlayer Windbreaker jacket, which is light, easy to pack and can be attached to a climbing harness, has been added to the Climbing Collection.

The company has also introduced several new innovations in its equipment range including a a new via ferrata set that provides progressive braking in the event of a fall; Bionic carabiners which combine radical designs with Beam technology – a precise heat forging process that yields optimum utilisation of materials and a unique surface finish; and new Rope Technology ropes which are stronger thanks to the unique interweave of the sheath and core filaments using Quick-Mesh technology.

New lighter Schoeller soft-shells

21 July 2006

“More and less” is the theme of the spring/summer 2008 collection from textile company Schoeller Switzerland, which means minimum weight and maximum function.

For parts of the body where wind repelling properties are more important than air permeability, the company has

introduced light WB-400-innovations which offers this protection through the bonding of two materials. Tangible benefits at high temperatures are also provided by the 3XDRY function finish, which ensures fast perspiration transport and consequently evaporation cooling. The same applies to UV protection which, with most outdoor fabrics from Schoeller, provides a factor of 50+ based on the European standard.

With graphic designs or mini rhomb looks and 3D reverses, the comfortable and hardwearing soft-shell innovations from the Schoeller-dryskin collection incorporate a new visual appeal and are said to feel like a second skin thanks to the high level of elasticity.

In addition, a silver-ion based coating technology is being used for the first time, which helps to prevent the spread of bacteria of all kinds and the occurrence of unpleasant perspiration odours. It can be applied to all Schoeller fabrics and can also be combined with other technologies such as 3XDRY, NanoSphere, c_change or schoeller-PCM.

New products from RadiciFibres at Interfilière

21 July 2006

Italy's RadiciFibres Fashion&Interiors—which offers technologically-advanced solutions for lingerie and sportswear manufacturers—will unveil several new products at Interfilière, Lyon, France, on September 2-4.

Radilon Plus PA 66 Taslan dtex 190F136 UV Protection is the company's major new innovation that will be presented. Fabrics made with this taslan yarn provide effective protection to the skin against ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

The UV protection provided by fabric depends on many factors such as the type of fibre, colour, finishing, moisture content, composition, type and tightness of the weave and area mass (gr/cm2). The weaving method must leave no gaps between threads through which UV rays could penetrate the cloth.

Fabrics made with RadilonPlus have been tested for compliance with EU standard EN 13758-I. The product is available in POY, FDY, Air Jet and DTY versions with various deniers and is suitable for sportswear and leisurewear.

Sympatex Protection provides ultra light sleeping systems

21 July 2006

Manufacturer of functional waterproof breathable products Sympatex Technologies is to present a new sleeping system for the active sports scene at Outdoor 2006 that focuses on thermal insulation, moisture transfer and reduction in weight.

The high-tech-membrane Sympatex Reflexion can be used as an insert laminate, and so the temperature scale is said to be 25% higher with the same filling quantity.

Sympatex Reflexion provides a constant body heat sensation even if the outside temperature decreases by 4° to 6°C.

The new system is said to combine 100% wind- and waterproofing and above-average breathability, which prevents the build-up of condensation.

Comfort Mapping technology added to Gore-Tex range

21 July 2006

WL Gore has incorporated Comfort Mapping technology into its summer 2007 clothing collection.

By adding different Gore-tex fabrics into the Comfort Mapping concept and using special seam-sealing technology to join laminates with different surfaces and textures, the new technology is said to not only regulate the body temperature in the zoned areas, but also improve next-to-skin comfort, reduce the overall weight and packability of the garment, while still guaranteeing long lasting waterproofness and breathability.

Brands such as Arc'teryx, adidas, Nike ACG and The North Face will use Gore-Tex Comfort Mapping in their spring/summer 2007 collections.

Columbia Sportswear names new VP of Sales

21 July 2006

US-based active apparel and footwear firm Columbia Sportswear Company has appointed Mick McCormick as vice president of Sales. Mr McCormick will be responsible for US apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories sales for the Columbia, Sorel and Montrail brands. He will join the team in August reporting to Tim Boyle, president and CEO.

Most recently, Mr McCormick was chief marketing officer for Golf Galaxy, Inc. and has also worked for Callaway Golf, Inc. and Nike Inc.

Ispo attracts more exhibitors

21 July 2006

Although ispo summer 06, which took place in Munich

from July 16 to 18, reported slightly lower visitor numbers this year (approximately 19,000), the number of exhibitors increased to 1,015 from 915 in 2005.

According to the organisers, the German trade visitors were especially reserved following the demanding weeks of the World Cup weeks and due to the hot summer temperatures, but the overseas visitors, representing approximately 100 countries, represented a high proportion of attendees. In addition to the traditionally strong participation from EU countries and Switzerland, there was a positive development in the number of visitors from Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, Turkey, India, North and South America, the Balkans, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

The fair launched several new platforms such as the new "Triathlon Transition Area" within running_ispo which presented the triathlon for the first time. A new project "Wearable Technology" depicted the integration of high-tech products in sports products, collections and accessories within outdoor_ispo. The product range extended from backpacks with solar cells and helmets with cameras to functional jackets with GPS navigation and T-shirts with iPod control all the way to gloves with integrated MP3 players. board_ispo put kiteboarding in focus with the "TradeWind" initiative. In addition to kites, rope systems, bars, trapezes, boards, bindings and safety systems, the kite industry also presented corresponding fashion. The board_ispo community also focused on traditional surfing with a new project "Glass & Resin" which presented the latest developments in surfboard construction and design.

AAFA urges House approval of FPI Competition in Contracting Act

21 July 2006

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) has urged the House of Representatives to approve legislation passed by the House Judiciary Committee that would phase out a requirement that the US military purchase uniform articles produced by the Federal Prison Industry (FPI) and open up business contracting opportunities for US apparel companies.

AAFA president and CEO Kevin Burke stated that if the legislation, H.R. 2965, is approved by Congress after the phase-out of their mandatory source, FPI will finally compete with private industry on a more level playing field. "AAFA supports FPI's commitment to turn inmates into productive citizens upon their release," Mr Burke said. "But this commitment should not displace private industry jobs. The contracts taken from AAFA members by FPI contributes to the demise of the textile and apparel industrial base, as there is very little commercial work for the remaining domestic companies in this industry, and they predominately subsist on government contracts under the Berry Amendment."

He noted that those companies are mostly union organised and feels they should not be shut out of the competitive process by a mandatory claim.

Textiles and garments exports raise Vietnam-EU trade forecast

21 July 2006

According to the Vietnamese Ministry of Trade (MoT), bilateral trade between Vietnam and the EU is estimated to reach a record of $9.2 billion in 2006, up 13.58% compared with 2005.

Vietnam is forecast to attain $6.05 billion from exports to the EU, a year-on-year increase of 12.04%, resulting in a trade surplus of $2.9 billion.

Footwear exports still remain the country's biggest cash earner, with a total revenue of $2 billion in 2005, doubling the 2000 figure, followed by garments and textiles with export values of $820 million last year.

Last year, trade between the nations reached $8.1 billion, of which Vietnam gained $5.4 billion from exports, and imported $2.7 billion of goods from the EU, up three times compared with the 2000 figure.

In the first half of this year, Vietnam's exports to the EU were forecast to rise by 32% on-year, with a 67% growth in textiles and garments.

New care solution renews textile coating for sportswear

21 July 2006

Sporting company Mammut Sports Group Ltd has launched a new care solution for textiles, Toko Active Dry, which is said to quickly transport perspiration away from the skin and immediately release it into the atmosphere.

The product renews the textile coating given to functional apparel during manufacture, which is lost through washing and wearing, and restores functionality.

Toko Active Dry makes apparel suppler and its antimicrobial additives guard against the build up of odour-causing bacteria. The treatment has an antistatic effect and maintains a comfortable next-to-skin climate. The product can either be put in the fabric conditioner compartment during a normal washing machine cycle, or sportswear can be soaked in the solution for 30 minutes.